1: DeLand O-4 (No date)1908 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

out of material which was once well known for fact, but has been lost in the mist of ages—is by the writer hereof regarded as warrant for bringing into this paper sundry narratives bearing upon the theory in question which in themselves may be of doubtful value, but which, when forming part of a symposium upon the theme of origin, may be legitimate material.

But we defer to a later stage of treatment of the general subject this phase of remote origin, only adding that, as regards the Mound Builders, it seems very probable that a rational connection will be found to be shown to exist between them and the Mandans; and that a few quotations from the earliest observers of the Mandans, by way of preliminary to an account of them when first known to civilized man, may not be out of place as indicating what we in the outset remarked as to their singularities.

Their Peculiar Characteristics. The Mandans conveyed to all visitors and observers who came in contact with them in the Eighteenth and the first half of the Nineteenth centuries the impression, in marked degree, that they were emphatically more civilized than other Indian tribes of the west, and that they were of such fair complexion and had hair and eyes of such color as to convey the distinct, profound impression—to some the belief—that they were not Indians in the usual sense of that word.

La Verendrye, who visited them in 1738 for several weeks, recorded of them that "their fortifications are not Indian. This nation is mixed with white and black." "The women have not the Indian physiognomy." Le Raye, who as a prisoner of the Brule Sioux was taken up the Missouri river in 1803 and into the Mandan villages, observes of them that they are "of the lightest complexion," that their hair "inclines to a chestnut color, and in some instances has a slight curl; it is never so dark and coarse as most other Indians;" that "their eyes are full and lively" and that they are "courteous and sociable." General Clarke (of the Lewis and Clarke expedition), who wintered with them in 1804-5, told Catlin that he would find them "a strange people and half white." Alexander Henry, who in 1806 visited them, says: "What struck me as extraordinary among these people was several children about ten years of age whose hair was perfectly gray, and who thus resembled aged persons; those I saw were all girls. These people in general have not such strong, coarse hair as other nations of North America; they have it much finer,

1: DeLand O-4 (No date)1908 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

rather inclining to a dark brown, and I observed some whose hair was almost fair;" eyes not jet black, common to other Indians, but "inclined to be a dark brown; some few are dark gray."

Maximilian, who tarried among and critically studied them in 1833, observes that their noses are sometimes "aqualine, or slightly curved, and often quite straight" and "not so long and arched as those of the Sioux"; that their eyes are "in general long and narrow, of a dark brown color;" that the children's hair "is often only dark brown," and that Brackenridge "speaks of brown hair among the Mandans. There are whole families among them, as well as among the Blackfeet, whose hair is gray, or black mixed with white, so that the whole head appears gray." While Catlin, who sojourned among them in 1832, declares that "they are distinct from all other red folks I have seen," as "differing in many respects, both in looks and customs, from all other tribes which I have seen;" that they were "many steps ahead of other tribes in manners and refinement"; that they were called "polite and friendly Mandans" by the traders; that he "was struck with the peculiar ease and elegance" of them; that "the diversity of complexions, the various colors of their hair and eyes, the singularity of their languages and their peculiar and unaccountable customs" made him "fully convinced that they have sprung from some other origin than that of the North American tribes, or that they are an amalgam of natives with some civilized race;" that "their personal appearance alone, independent of their modes and customs, pronounces them at once as more or less than Indians;" that a stranger "is first struck with the different shades of complexions and various colors of their hair which he sees in a crowd about him, and is at once almost disposed to exclaim that 'These are not Indians.'" That there are many women "whose skins are almost white, with the most pleasing symmetry of features, with hazel, with gray and with blue eyes—with mildness and sweetness of expression and excessive modesty of demeanor, which render them exceedingly pleasant and beautiful."

Habitat. The habitat of the Mandans when first seen by white men from the east was, to what may be regarded as a moral certainty, at and in the immediate vicinity, northward, of Mandan and Bismarck in what is now North Dakota, territory then claimed by Spain, and probably by England. We refer to the

1: DeLand O-4 (No date)1908 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

tribes, and have on that account often been obliged to change the seat of their villages. 105

"Yet they have often been quarreling with the Ricaras, who like them are agricultural people; and they often make predatory expeditions against the Shoshones, in the eastern valleys of the Rocky mountains. Both the Mandans and the Minnetaries consider themselves as natives of that part of the country.

"The tradition of the Mandans is that they came from under ground by means of a great vine, which, breaking under the weight of some of them, has left behind a part of their nation, whom they expect to join after death. The color of the chief who visited Washington appeared less dark than that of our Indians, and he was the only full-breed Indian ever seen by me, whose eyes were of a bluish cast. It is believed that this is the tribe, often spoken of as White Indians, and which gave rise to the fabulous account of a tribe descended from the Welsh and speaking their language, a tale which the knowledge we have now acquired of the various Indian nations and of their dialects has set at rest. 773 142

"The vocabulary of the stationary Minetaries and the specimen of the Crow of Upsaroka dialect were obtained by Dr. Say. We knew from Lewis and Clarke that the Mandans spoke a kindred dialect, and this has been confirmed by the significant names of their chiefs, subscribed to a treaty with the United States. Lewis and Clarke appear to have considered the Rapid, Fall or Paunch Indians, sometimes also called the "Minetaries of the Prairies," as belonging to the same family. But all the subsequent accounts agree in assigning to them an entirely distinct language." (P. 125.) 197

The above reference to the "chief who visited Washington" (Big White) is from Albert Gallatin.

We will here refer to the note by Dr. DeLorme W. Robinson on the Mandans, found among his notes on "Historical Sketch of North and South Dakota," by Dr. William M. Blackburn, in Hist. Coll., S. D., Vol. I, page 98, being a very concise and creditable summary of the tribe. In that note Dr. Robinson affirms that "their traditions give their former abode as being about the headwaters of Lake Winnipeg. It is probable that they were driven from their homes at Lake Winnipeg about 1680 by the Crees and Assiniboines, both powerful tribes which about this period came into possession of firearms. Their first stopping place, after being driven out by their enemies, was on the Mis- 174

1: DeLand O-4 (No date)1908 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

whites; it would take a whole summer to make the journey, and that since they were at war with the Pananas the men would not undertake to go far, the roads being closed to them. That cattle were abundant on the prairies, far larger and fatter than those we had seen on their prairies; their coat white and of several colors. He showed us horns split in half, of a greenish color, which hold nearly three pints. In all the huts they have them in use as ladles, proving that they have killed many when the road was open. That was all I could learn even by chance, as I had relied on my interpreter, that I would have time to be thoroughly informed at leisure.

"Six days after the Assiniboines left I sent my son, the Chevalier, with Sieur Nolant, six Frenchmen and several Mandans, to the nearest fort, which is on the bank of the river. If well received they were to sleep there, to get the best information of the course of the river; who dwell there; if they are acquainted with the lower part, in accordance with what was told us; to learn all that could be ascertained by signs and demonstrations. After their departure Mr. de la Marque walked about to observe the size of their fort and their fortifications.

The Village. "I decided to have the huts counted. It was found that there were a hundred and thirty of them. All the streets, squares and huts resemble each other. Several of our Frenchmen wandered about; they found the streets and squares very clean, the ramparts very level and broad, the palisades supported on cross pieces mortised into posts of fifteen feet. At fifteen points doubled are green skins which are put for sheathing when required, fastened only above when needed, as in the bastion there are four at each curtain, well flanked. The fort is built on a height in the open prairie, with a ditch upwards of fifteen feet deep by fifteen to eighteen feet wide. Their fort can only be gained by steps or posts, which can be removed when threatened by an enemy. If all their forts are alike they may be called impregnable to Indians. Their fortifications are not Indian. This nation is mixed white and black.

"The women are fairly good looking, especially the white, many with blonde and fair hair. Both men and women of this nation are very laborious; their huts are large and spacious, separated into several compartments by thick planks; nothing is left lying about; all their baggage is in large bags hung on posts; their beds

1: DeLand O-4 (No date)1908 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

764 length was pronounced by his brother, in which he impressed on their minds, the great importance which the deceased man had been to their nation; rehearsed his war exploits, and concluded by urging all to follow his example, and to become of equal usefulness to their tribe. Then they would be sure of following and becoming companions of him, and all the other great warriors, which had died before, in the world of spirits. After this address was closed, provisions were brought out, consisting of boiled dog's flesh, of which the company just tasted, and then a bowl full of it was presented to the dead man. He was then taken up by four men and carried outside of the village, just into the edge of the woods, and placed on a stage which had been previously erected, about ten feet high. The bowl of food was brought and set by his head, and his arms and accoutrements laid by his side. In this manner their dead are deposited, and are never buried. The wife and relations of the deceased made the most violent and dreadful howlings, tearing their hair and appearing to be in the deepest anguish, under the loss they had sustained."

●142 **Complexion, Etc.** "The Mandans and the Gros Ventres are of the lightest complexion, and largest Indians on the Missouri. Their hair inclines to a chestnut color, and in some instances has a slight curl; it is never so lank and course as most other Indians. Their eyes are full and lively, their cheek bones rather high, and their countenances open and agreeable. The Gros Ventres have more of a fierce, savage look, than the Mandans who are courteous
291 and sociable in their behavior. They are neat in their dress, which is similar to that of the Rus, except that they decorate it with
353 white rabbit, and white ermine skins. Many of their lodges, or huts, are decorated in a beatiful manner; having the inside lined with the richest furs, such as the lynx, beaver, otter, white rabbit, martin, fox, mountain cat and white ermine, sewed together like patch-work, which gives them a rich and beautiful appearance. The lodge of the head chief was sixty feet in diameter, elegantly lined with furs, and the seats, which are also used as beds, were covered with the grizzly bear and buffalo skins. These people
439 keep their lodges and buildings in a state of great neatness. They cultivate the same kind of produce with the Rus, and carry on
648 a trade with the roving Indians, who occasionally visit them. The Mandans and Gros Ventres live in great friendship, although

1: DeLand O-4 (No date)1908 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

114 The observations of Bradbury concerning the Rees may be found in Part I of this paper, (Vol. 3, S. D. Hist. Coll., p. 432, et. seq.) Extracts from his book, relative to the Mandans follow:

●142 **Brown Hair. Big White.** "28th. (June, 1811.) Having selected some silver ornaments which I proposed to present to She-he-ke, Mr. Brackenridge agreed to accompany me to the Mandan village. We obtained horses from Mr. Lewis for the journey, and about ten o'clock set off. We crossed Knife river at the lower of the Minnetaree villages, and paid the accustomed price to the squaw who ferried us over; for each of us three balls and three charges of powder. Before we left the village, we were invited into the lodge belonging to the White Wolf, one of the chiefs of this village, with whom we smoked. I was surprised to observe that his squaw and one of his children had brown hair, although their skins did not appear to be lighter colored than the rest of the tribe. As the woman appeared to be above forty years of age, it is almost certain that no intercourse had taken place between these people and the whites at the time she was born. I should have been less surprised at the circumstance had they been one of those tribes who change their places of residence; but they have not even a tradition of having resided in any other place than where the present village stands. The White Wolf appeared to be much pleased with our visit, and by signs invited us to call at his lodge whenever we came that way. He shook hands very cordially with us at parting. In our way to the Mandans we passed through the small village belonging to the Ahwahhaways, consisting of not more than eighteen or twenty lodges. This nation can scarcely muster fifty warriors and yet they carry on an offensive war against the Snake and Flathead Indians. On our arrival at the Mandans, She-he-ke, as before, came to the door of his lodge and said, 'Come in house.' We had scarcely entered when he looked earnestly at us, and said, 'whisky.' In this we could not gratify him, as we had not thought of bringing any. I presented the silver ornaments to him, with which he seemed much pleased, and after smoking we were feasted with a dish consisting of jerked buffalo meat, corn and beans boiled together. I mentioned to him my wish to purchase some moccasins, and he sent out into the village to inform the squaws, who flocked into the lodge in such numbers, and with so plentiful a supply, that I could not buy a tenth part. I furnished myself

1: DeLand O-4 (No date)1908 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

648 **Peaceable With Americans—Government Neglect.** "During a short period of their history, the Aricarees were at war with the Americans; but for many years they have strictly maintained peace, and have fought with us and against our enemies. The Mandans and Minnetarees claim never to have shed a white man's blood, although some of their number have been killed by whites. For their fidelity they have been repaid in starvation and neglect. [165] Many of these friendly Indians, particularly among the Aricarees, have during the past ten years, died of actual hunger or the diseases incident to a state of famine. Within the past three years there seem to be some evidences of increased legislative interest in them, but the benefits arising therefrom are by no means equal to their needs or their deserts." (p. 31-32.)

●142 **Complexion—Hidatsa and Mandan.** "The majority of the Hidatsa have the ordinary dusky Indian complexion, which is, however, not of a unusual shade, as far as I have seen in any tribe. There are none of this nation that would be considered dark for Indians. Among various tribes of western Indians may be found individuals, claiming pure aboriginal blood, who possess complexions much fairer than the average Indian, with light-colored hair and eyes. Such individuals are more common among the Mandans and Minnetarees than they are among most of the neighboring tribes. A natural or inherited clearness of complexion, too, is more easily discernable among members of the village tribes than among members of roving bands who are more exposed to the weather. The presence of pale Indians in these tribes was noted by travelers in early days, before intermarriages with whites were common enough to have accounted for it."

Mandans' Fair Skin. "Lewis and Clarke and Gass notice this fairness when speaking of the Mandans only, but their remarks are general. Catlin speaks of the fairness of the Mandans only, and supposes this peculiarity to arise from some pre-Columbian infusion of European blood. The Prince of Neuwied, who visited these tribes but one year later than Mr. Catlin, denies that the Mandans are of fairer complexion than their neighbors, while he asserts, at the same time, that, 'after a thorough ablution, the skin of some of them appears almost white.' I have heard old Mandans say that when the Minnetarees, including the Crows, first came among them, the strangers were a fairer race than they.

1: DeLand O-4 (No date)1908 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

"Of the Crows, who, as before shown, once formed one nation with the Hidatsa, Colonel Reynolds, in his Report of the Exploration of the Yellowstone (1859), p. 48, says: 'The Crows are fairer than the Sioux, many of the mountain band being sallow and hardly a shade darker than whites who undergo similar exposure. This fact was so marked that the first seen were supposed to be half breeds, but we were assured that they were of pure Indian descent.'"

European Blood Not Essential. "It is not necessary to suppose that an intermixture of European blood in order to account for lightness of color in an Indian. There is no reason why marked varieties of color should not arise in the red race as it has done in other races of men, and as it has so often done, under cultivation, within specific limits in the lower animals. I have seen full-blooded Indians who were whiter than some half-breeds and whiter than the darkest representatives of the Aryan race. An increase of hairiness is a more reliable sign of Caucasian blood in an Indian than a diminution of color in the skin; and I never could discover that those fair Indians, claiming pure blood, were more hairy than others. The fairness of which I speak is not albinism, for the eyesight of the fair Indians is as perfect as that of the dark; they have no unusual appearance of the pupil, and exposure to sunlight darkens their skins. I have never seen an Albino Indian."

Gray Hair—Minnetarees and Mandans. "Among various western tribes, individuals may be found who are characterized, even in childhood, by having coarse gray hair. From all I could see and learn, I should think that such persons are more numerous among the Minnetarees and Mandans than in any other tribe; and they are perhaps the most numerous among the Mandans." (pp. 43 and 44.)

Language Sonants—Mandans Different. "If a party of Indians should be seated in an adjoining room, or at a short distance from the listener, conversing, where the voices can be heard, but not a syllable distinguished, the accustomed ear has little difficulty in discerning which one of the many languages of the plains the Indians are speaking. Each language has its own peculiar sonant character. It is more difficult to distinguish by this character the Hidatsa from the Crow than from the Dakota

1: DeLand O-4 (No date)1908 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

tional Indian missionary who has been among the Mandans at Fort Berthold for some thirty years: 797

The Missionaries. "Mr. Hall, the missionary among these people, in discussing their general condition, past and present, says:

" 'Twenty-five years ago the old Indian community was like Sodom; now the Indians live decently on the allotments, with their wives, and none of them have more than one. There is vice to fight; but only as in every white community. Religiously the phenomena of growth are seen here as elsewhere. Form and ritual are in sight, and are adopted before the inner power is felt. The old beliefs have largely passed away from the younger generation. The Christian teaching answering to all that was of higher aspiration and better living in the old religion, has saved them from infidelity and won their intellectual faith. The church is more a social centre to them than a spiritual.'

"Both the Congregationalists and Catholics now have religious organizations on the reservation. The former have three churches, and the latter a church and school combined, but this was unused at the time of the writer's visit. One of the Congregational chapels is largely the work of the Aricaree Indians. It cost nine hundred dollars, and of this the Indians contributed more than one-third. They hewed the logs and hauled the stone and lumber, the latter from a distance of sixty miles. There are also a few Episcopalians among these people." (p. 229.)

Says Wheeler of the allowances to be made in judging of the morals of the Mandans: 000

Morals. "In considering the moral excellencies and delinquinces of the old Mandans and allied tribes, we must necessarily, I take it, consider in connection therewith their ideas of entertainment and hospitality. And we must remember that we are reviewing the ethical acts and beliefs of an uncivilized, uncultivated people, touched with the frost of savagery and barbarism, and a hundred years removed, as well, from the canons of moral conduct at present taught them." (p. 230.)

Welsh Theory—Indian Supervision. "In the early days the Mandans were noted for their long light hair and fair complexions. This caused Catlin to exploit a notion that these people were descended from a colony of Welshmen who were supposed to have landed on the Florida coast or thereabouts in very early 142

1: DeLand O-4 (No date)1908 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

days and then mysteriously to have disappeared. The hair of the men often trailed on the ground, and Henry, Catlin, and others refer to this in much detail. Now they wear their hair cut short, of their own volition, and in my brief visit I noticed no peculiarities of complexion or in color or hair. All of them, Mandans, Aricarees, and Minnetarees, seem to be a sturdy, manly set of fellows, with frank and intelligent countenances. I am inclined to think they have not had the best of supervision in the past, nor been treated with sufficient liberality and consideration by the government."

Noted Chiefs—Patriarchs. "Catlin was effusive in his praise of these Indians, and both he and Maximilian appear to have found some individuals who savored strongly of the Chingachgook type of Indian, and whose memories and virtues are venerated today. Such a man, for one, was the old Mah-to-toh-papa, or Four Bears, of Catlin, the Meto-Tope of Maximilian. and I can easily believe that Lean, or Poor Wolf, a Gros Ventre of today, now blind and infirm with the weight of his eighty-three years, has been a man that one could trust and respect. De Smet says that Four Bears was 'the most civil and affable Indian' that he ever met on the Missouri. Two-Chiefs, and Leggings, Mandans, and now old like Poor Wolf, a Gros Ventre, or Hidatsa, must also have been men of dignity and character." (Wheeler, p. 240.)

Race Declining. "As a pure race 'the polite and friendly Mandans,' as they were known to the traders, are slowly but surely declining, and it will not be long before the last one will have departed for the happy hunting grounds. The reservation rolls call for two hundred and fifty Mandans. In talking with Two-Chiefs, I asked him how many full-blood, pure Mandans he thought still remained. The old man, seventy-two years of age, stood in deep thought for several moments, and then replied, 'Not more than ten families; all the others are mixed blood.' Numerically, the tribe as a whole seems to be holding its own." (Wheeler, p. 242.)

Fort Mandan. "Not a vestige of Fort Mandan remains. On the return of the expedition in 1806, under date of August 17th, the Lewis and Clarke itinerary says: 'In reaching Fort Mandan we found a few pickets standing on the riverside, but all the houses except one, had been burnt by an accidental fire.'

1: DeLand O-4 (No date)1908 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

773 the water, etc., these and kindred phases of the mythology which is the sole back-ground of their tribal past, make up the substance of the strange narratives unfolded, through the moderate abilities of the interpreter, Joseph Packineau, son of Charles Pactineaude or Pattineaux of the fur-trading days, to the writer.

●142 "While there was nothing specially marked about the appearance of Little Owl, we can not refrain from remarking that Bear's Ghost made a distinct impression by his bearing and the manner of his speech. He was one of the most perfect specimens of the commanding physical man we ever observed. His figure was tall and lithe, his eye exceptionally bright, intelligent and winning, his voice soft yet animating; his speech was accompanied by such grace of attitude and fitting gestures as to captivate the listener. His complexion was much lighter than that of the Sioux Indian of the Dakotas, yet not as fair as to relieve his countenance from the general impress of Indian lineage. There was, however, less than usual of the more salient Indian features in high or prominent cheek-bones and roughness of contour. He appeared, in a word, the perfect gentleman and master of expression, and it was difficult to realize that an Indian was discoursing or narrating. His entire attitude was that of intelligent handling of his subject and of utter absence of any sense of inferiority. Sincerity, and a desire to emphasize the point that what he said was truth itself—these elements gave character to his narrative. And while much that he recounted seemed trival and fantastic, yet the air in which it was told gave his story the cast of respect if not of persuasion. We here repeat what has been said before in this paper—that it is believed it is not improbable that the reference to the vine and the under-world was derived from the tradition of the Gros Ventres or Minnetarees who probably came to the Missouri from the Devil's Lake region.

"Little Owl's account will be first given, as it was obtained first. It is seen that if his narrative and that of Bear's Ghost is given credence the Mandans came up the Missouri and from the lower Mississippi."

773 539 **Little Owl's Account—The Creation, Etc.** "The five villages below the Knife river. Bear-on-the-Water and he is the oldest man, he says they came from the—where the Mississippi empties in the sea; after that I can't give you an account of it. They

3:Will and Spinden E-5 (1905) 1906
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

In 1837, however, another great calamity came upon the Mandans. Again smallpox attacked them, raged for many weeks and finally left but one hundred and twenty-five souls.[1] These were taken in by the Arikara with whom they intermarried; finally they separated, again forming a small village of their own at Ft. Berthold. In 1850 there were three hundred and eighty-five living, but these were very largely of mixed blood. To-day there are only a few of the full-blood Mandans left, although the latest official returns give a total of two hundred and forty-nine. The culture has changed, the language has changed, and as a nation the Mandans are practically extinct.

PHYSICAL CHARACTERISTICS: — A discussion of the physical characteristics of the Mandans is rather interesting in view of the fact that so many tales of their being a white race were circulated. Verendrye was told by the Assiniboine that he was on the way to visit people white like himself. The Assiniboine word for the Mandans, *ouachipanne*, was the close relative of the Mandan word for white man, *ouachi*. Catlin became convinced of the white origin of the Mandans and Verendrye and Henry both commented on their light complexions.

Verendrye said he expected to see a different sort of people but they differed little from the Assiniboine. Then later: "This nation is mixed white and black. The women are fairly good looking especially the white, and many have blond hair. . . . . The men are stout and tall . . . . . with a good physiognomy. The women have not the Indian physiognomy. . . . . "[2]

Lewis and Clarke did not mention any particular difference between the Mandans and other Indians of the region, although Catlin relates that when he left St. Louis to ascend the Missouri, Governor Clarke told him that he was going among a strange people, half white. Henry, however, did notice some peculiarities in the Mandan physique. He says[3] that in general the Mandans had not the coarse hair of Indians, it was finer, rather inclining to dark brown, and some had fair hair. The eyes of the Mandans were not as black as usual, but brown and some

[1] Schoolcraft: vol. III, p. 254. [2] Op. cit., p. 21. [3] Op. cit., vol. I, p. 341.

3: Will and Spinden E-5 (1905) 1906
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

142 grey. He also says there were several children whose hair was perfectly grey, these were mostly girls.

Catlin[1] possibly exaggerates the physical differences. His account states that their personal appearance at once showed them as more than savages; there were many shades of complexion and hair; many women had white skin with hazel, blue, and grey eyes; they showed every shade of hair except red; some had hair perfectly white or a silvery grey, women more than men; the grey hair was very coarse, while the other hair was fine and soft.

Maximilian took particular pains to ridicule the theory of white origin and especially that of Welsh origin. But even he admits the peculiarity of complexion seen at times. On this subject he said that they were usually brown or copper colored, some were yellow or whitish. When clean there were a number who were nearly white with red cheeks; they had long coarse hair usually black, but many children had brown hair; there were families with grey hair; one family contained members with brown, black, grey, and white hair and eye-lashes.[2] So much for color. There can be little question that there was a tendency toward light complexion among the Mandans, and all of the authorities, even Maximilian, express the opinion that this was not from contact with the whites. Among the Hidatsa and Crow as well is found the phenomenon of grey and white haired women and children, but there is no account of the brown, soft hair, and light skin further described by the earliest visitors to the Mandans. As to the cause of this light skin [143] which appeared now and then it is difficult to decide. It seems, however, to place the Mandans among the tribes where partial albinism was of frequent occurrence. It is almost needless to say that there is absolutely no trace either in language or in physical characteristics of any European origin or admixture.

141 Next is the question of size and general physique. Verendrye[3] says:—"The men are stout and tall, generally very active, fairly good looking. . . ." In a note appended to the location of an old Mandan village, on one of Lewis and Clarke's maps are the following words, "here human bones of large size."

[1] Op. cit., vol. I, p. 93. [2] Op. cit., pp. 374-5. [3] Op. cit., p. 21.

3:Will and Spinden E-5 (1905) 1906
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

Henry says,[1] the men were tall, stout and well built. Maximilian also testifies along the same line: "Most of the Mandans are vigorous men, strong and large."[2] And adds later that they were a strong race, a little above medium height, possibly not as large as the Minnetarees, robust, with broad shoulders.[3] Judging from the information so far, the Mandans should be considered a large race, but on the other side there is the statement from Catlin[4] that the stature of the Mandans was below the ordinary, but they were well proportioned. All of these observers but Catlin thus speak of the Mandans as above average height. 141

For a further description of the Mandan physique there are only a few words from Maximilian,[5] who says that they had a less aquiline nose than their neighbors, less prominent cheek bones than the Dakotas; thin noses and straight; long, narrow eyes of a deep brown, a little raised and contracted at the inner corner; large mouth, large angular jaws, various shaped heads, but foreheads no lower on the average than among Europeans. 142

VILLAGES:—The Mandans, as has been said, were a sedentary tribe and lived in fixed villages for long periods of time. In these villages they built lasting lodges of a type similar to those of the Arikara, Omaha, and other tribes lower down the Missouri, though with small differences in the details of construction. The villages were usually well fortified, neat and orderly in the early days, but a considerable change seems to have come upon the people after their misfortunes, for there was much less care taken in the arrangement and fortification of the villages in their later locations. The first description of the Mandan village is from Verendrye, who makes it appear almost a model town. As this is the only description of the Mandan villages during the prosperity of the nation,[1] a summary of his account is here given:[6] 361 [171]

"Many people came to meet us but nothing in comparison with what appeared on the ramparts and along the trenches. . . . . Their fort can only be gained by steps or posts which can be removed when the enemy threatens. . . . . If all the forts are

[1] Op. cit., p. 341. [2] Op. cit., vol. I, p. 29. [3] Ibid., p. 372.
[4] Op. cit., vol. I, p. 96. [5] Op. cit., p. 37. [6] Op. cit., pp. 17-23.

[1] [ie., about 1738. See p. 86.-- Analyst]

6: Wied-Neuwied T-5 (1832-1834) 1843 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

161 Morse,* therefore, estimates the number of these people rather too high, when he states it at 1250 souls.

142 The Mandans are a vigorous, well-made race of people, rather above the middling stature, and very few of the men could be called short. The tallest man now living was Mahchsi-Karehde (the flying war eagle), who was five feet ten inches two lines, Paris measure (above six feet English). In general, however, they are not so tall as the Manitaries. Many of them are robust, broad-shouldered, and muscular, while others are slender and small limbed. Their physiognomy is, in general, the same as that of most of the Missouri Indians, but their noses are not so long and arched as those of the Sioux, nor have they such high cheek bones. The nose of the Mandans and Manitaries is not broad—sometimes aquiline, or slightly curved, and often quite straight. Their eyes are, in general, long and narrow, of a dark brown colour; the inner angle is often rather lower in childhood, but it is rarely so in maturer age. The mouth is broad, large, rather prominent, and the lower jaw broad and angular. No great difference occurs in the form of the skull: in general I did not find the facial angle smaller than in Europeans, yet there are some exceptions.† Their hair is long, thick, lank, and black, but seldom as jet and glossy as that of the Brazilians: that of children is often only dark brown, especially at the tips; and Bradbury speaks of brown hair among the Mandans. There are whole families among them, as well as among the Blackfeet, whose hair is grey, or black mixed with white, so that the whole head appears grey. The families of Sih-Chida and Mato-Chiha are instances of this peculiarity. The latter chief was particularly remarkable in this respect: his hair grew in distinct locks of brown, black, silver grey, but mostly white, and his eyebrows perfectly white, which had a strange effect in a tall otherwise handsome man, between [302] twenty and thirty years of age. They encourage the growth of their hair, and often lengthen it by artificial means. Their teeth, like those of all the Missouri Indians, are particularly fine, strong, firm, even, and as white as ivory. It is very seldom that you see a defect or a tooth

114

* See Dr. Morse's Report, p. 252. He speaks (p. 349) of the Mandans, Blackfeet, Rapid (Fall) Indians, and Assiniboins. His tables of the Indian population of the United States are in page 362.

† Say, who, in general, gives a very accurate description of the North American Indians (see Major Long's Travels), lays too much stress, as it appears to me, on the character of the receding of the forehead; for, by a comparison of a great many skulls, I have fully convinced myself of the contrary. Say affirmed, also, that the facial angle is not so small as Professor Blumenbach supposes. The Indian features, as far as my experience reaches, cannot be called either Mongol or Malay, the latter of which is more perceptible in the Brazilians, notwithstanding the manifest affinity with the North Americans. The learned traveller, Augustus de St. Hilaire, even attributes to the Brazilians a conformation of the skull, according to which those people are endowed with inferior intellectual faculties. (See Voyages dans les Districts de Diamande). The missionary, Parker, in his Travels to the Columbia River, p. 155, expresses himself, in this respect, entirely in accordance with my views; and D'Orbigny confirms them in respect to the South Americans, in the conformation of whose skulls he found considerable diversities.

6: Wied-Neuwied T-5 (1832-1834) 1843 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

wanting even in old people, though, in the latter, they are often worn very short, which is chiefly to be attributed to their chewing hard, dry meat. The women are pretty robust, and sometimes tall, but, for the most part, they are short and broad shouldered. They are but few who can be called handsome as Indians, but there are many tolerable and some pretty faces among them. It is usually said of the Mandan women that they, in some respects, have a natural conformation, such as Le Vaillant and Peron ascribe to the Hottentot women; but it seems to be owing, in the Mandan women, less to nature than to artificial means.* The children have frequently slender limbs, and very prominent bellies. Deformed persons are very rare among the Mandans. I, however, saw a very little dwarf with a long, narrow face, and one man who squinted. Persons who had lost the sight of one eye, or with a cataract, are by no means uncommon. There were several deaf and dumb, among whom two brothers and a sister were all born with this defect. Some goitres, or, rather, thick necks among the women, are, doubtless, caused by too great exertions in carrying burdens on their backs. Instances where joints of the fingers are wanting are frequent, but these come under the head of voluntary mutilations.

The colour of these Indians is a fine brown, sometimes reddish, more or less dark, which might, sometimes, come under the denomination of copper colour. In some it is more of a greyish-brown, in others yellowish; after a thorough ablution the skin of some of them appears almost white, and even some colour in their cheeks.† They do not disfigure their bodies, only they make some apertures in the outer rim of the ear, in which they hang strings of beads, brass or iron rings of different sizes, or shells, the last of which they obtain from other Indian tribes. If they are questioned respecting these shells, they answer that they were brought from the sea. These Indians are vain, and in this respect childish, like all savage nations. They are very fond of ornament, and the young men have always a little looking-glass suspended from their wrists. The traders sell these looking-glasses in a pasteboard case, which, however, is immediately changed for a solid wooden frame, and attached to the wrist by a red ribbon or a leather strap. The looking-glasses are framed in various ways; the rude frame is often painted red, or with stripes of different colours, with footsteps of bears or buffaloes carved on it. Nay, sometimes these

* Hanc deformitatem a viris ipsis ut dicunt, tractibus ampe repetitis producitur. In mammillis labia externa in orbem tum ad quatuor digitos transversos prominent; in aliis labia interna valde pendent; immo viarum ars in partibus ipsis figuras artificiose fictas format.

Feminæ hac mutatæ cupidæ parvi æstimantur, et neglectæ sunt.

Modo est in Mandanis, Minnitaris, et in Crows, magis autem in Minnitaris; in Mandanis, a mulieribus discalceatis, magis quam ab earundem hic non perversa adhibitur.

† Volney has many inaccuracies in what he says of the colour of the Indians. (Vol. II. p. 435.) According to him, the children are born quite white like the Europeans; that the women are white on the thighs, hips, and lower parts of the body, where the skin is covered by the clothing; that it is wholly erroneous to suppose that the copper colour is natural to them, &c. Mr. Von Humboldt has long since refuted all these assertions.

7: Catlin R, E-5 (1832-1840) 1857
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

000 their conquests, not with the bow or the javelin, but with their small black eyes, which shoot out from under their unfledged brows, and pierce the boldest, fiercest chieftain to the heart.

181 The Mandans are certainly a very interesting and pleasing people in their personal appearance and manners; differing in many respects, both in 721 looks and customs, from all other tribes which I have seen. They are not a warlike people; for they seldom, if ever, carry war into their enemies' country; but when invaded, shew their valour and courage to be equal to that of any people on earth. Being a small tribe, and unable to contend on the wide prairies with the Sioux and other roaming tribes, who are ten times more numerous; they have very judiciously located themselves in a permanent village, which is strongly fortified, and ensures their preservation.

181 By this means they have advanced further in the arts of manufacture; have supplied their lodges more abundantly with the comforts, and even luxuries of life, than any Indian nation I know of. The consequence of this is, that this tribe have taken many steps ahead of other tribes in manners and refinements (if I may be allowed to apply the word refinement to Indian life); and are therefore familiarly (and correctly) denominated, by the Traders and others, who have been amongst them, "the polite and friendly Mandans."

There is certainly great justice in the remark; and so forcibly have I been struck with the peculiar ease and elegance of these people, together with the diversity of complexions, the various colours of their hair and eyes; the singularity of their language, and their peculiar and unaccountable customs, that I am fully convinced that they have sprung from some other origin than that of the other North American tribes, or that they are an amalgam of natives with some civilized race.

Here arises a question of very great interest and importance for discussion; and, after further familiarity with their character, customs, and traditions, if I forget it not, I will eventually give it further consideration. Suffice it then, for the present, that their *personal appearance* alone, independant of their modes and customs, pronounces them at once, as more or less, than savage.

● 142 A stranger in the Mandan village is first struck with the different shades of complexion, and various colours of hair which he sees in a crowd about him; and is at once almost disposed to exclaim that "these are not Indians."

There are a great many of these people whose complexions appear as light as half breeds; and amongst the women particularly, there are many whose skins are almost white, with the most pleasing symmetry and proportion of features; with hazel, with grey, and with blue eyes,—with mildness and sweetness of expression, and excessive modesty of demeanour, which render them exceedingly pleasing and beautiful.

Why this diversity of complexion I cannot tell, nor can they themselves

7: Catlin R, E-5 (1832-1840) 1857
NQ17 Mandan NQ17

142 account for it. Their traditions, so far as I have yet learned them, afford us no information of their having had any knowledge of white men before the visit of Lewis and Clarke, made to their village thirty-three years ago Since that time there have been but very few visits from white men to this place, and surely not enough to have changed the complexions and the customs of a nation. And I recollect perfectly well that Governor Clarke told me, before I started for this place, that I would find the Mandans a strange people and half white.

The diversity in the colour of hair is also equally as great as that in the complexion; for in a numerous group of these people (and more particularly amongst the females, who never take pains to change its natural colour, as the men often do), there may be seen every shade and colour of hair that can be seen in our own country, with the exception of red or auburn, which is not to be found.

And there is yet one more strange and unaccountable peculiarity, which can probably be seen nowhere else on earth; nor on any rational grounds accounted for,—other than it is a freak or order of Nature, for which she has not seen fit to assign a reason. There are very many, of both sexes, and of every age, from infancy to manhood and old age, with hair of a bright silvery grey; and in some instances almost perfectly white.

[302] This singular and eccentric appearance is much oftener seen among the women than it is with the men; for many of the latter who have it, seem ashamed of it, and artfully conceal it, by filling their hair with glue and black and red earth. The women, on the other hand, seem proud of it, and display it often in an almost incredible profusion, which spreads over their shoulders and falls as low as the knee. I have ascertained, on a careful enquiry, that about one in ten or twelve of the whole tribe are what the French call "cheveux gris," or greyhairs; and that this strange and unaccountable phenomenon is not the result of disease or habit; but that it is unquestionably a hereditary character which runs in families, and indicates no inequality in disposition or intellect. And by passing this hair through my hands, as I often have, I have found it uniformly to be as coarse and harsh as a horse's mane; differing materially from the hair of other colours, which amongst the Mandans, is generally as fine and as soft as silk.

The reader will at once see, by the above facts, that there is enough upon the faces and heads of these people to stamp them peculiar,—when he meets them in the heart of this almost boundless wilderness, presenting such diversities of colour in the complexion and hair; when he knows from what he has seen, and what he has read, that all other primitive tribes known in America, are dark copper-coloured, with jet black hair.

000 From these few facts alone, the reader will see that I am amongst a strange and interesting people, and know how to pardon me, if I lead him through a maze of novelty and mysteries to the knowledge of a strange, yet kind and hospitable, people, whose fate, like that of all their race is sealed;—

10: Neill #4(no date) 1884 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

and treasures, as it contains every thing he values most, viz: two bulls' heads, which seem to be their great Manitou and protection. They are well daubed over with earth, and particular care is taken of them. There is laid on, or rather hung up, his arms, shield, ammunition, scalps of his enemies, and every thing he most values. 353

MORTAR AND PESTLE.

Next to this stage, stand the mortar and pestle, fixed firm in the ground, and the remainder of the hut from that to the door is vacant during the daytime, but occupied during the night by the horses. Then there still remains a large space in the center, around the fire, for the use of the family, which is generally swept clean once a day. 342 412 231

CORN STAGE.

Fronting the entrance of each porch stands a stage raised about eight feet from the ground, twenty feet in length, and ten feet in breadth, for the purpose of hanging up their corn to dry, in the fall; these stages have a tolerable good flooring, which in the fall is covered with beans to dry, and posts are erected upon them, on the tops of which are laid poles or rafters, to which the corn and sliced squashes are suspended in tresses to dry. When their harvest is over, they must have a pretty effect, but at this season of the year they are lumbered up with different kinds of drift-wood, of which they make their fires, and it gives a very ugly appearance to the villages. 343 251 313 372

DRIFT WOOD.

This wood they collect, in the spring, when the ice breaks up, and when great quantities of this wood floats down, the natives being expert swimmers, and so very active, that there is scarcely a large tree escapes them, until they have a sufficient stock for the year. I observed lying opposite to each village, an immense pile of this wood, and some trees of an amazing size. Commonly, when they collect the drift wood there come down numbers of drowned buffalo, that have perished in attempting to cross above, at a season when the ice was bad. These animals the natives are very careful to haul on shore, as they prefer the flesh in that state. [222] [268

LIGHT HAIRED CHILDREN.

An extraordinary sight that struck me among these people, was to see several children, of about ten years of age, whose hair was perfectly gray, and bore a strong resemblance to aged persons. Those I saw were all girls. These people in general have not that strong coarse hair, so peculiar to the natives of North America; it is of a much finer nature, rather inclining to 142●

[See Category 16, p. 340.-Ed.]

10: Neill 1-4 (no date) 1884 NQ17 Mandan NQ17

●142 a dark brown, some few indeed I observed whose hair was almost fair. A Big Belly, in particular, I saw with yellow hair. This circumstance, I believe, could scarcely proceed from any connection with the whites, as it is now more than thirty years since they first saw us, and this man was at least forty years old. Their eyes are jet black, some few are of a dark grey.

LONG HAIR.

302 The men wear their hair long, twisted into small quaittes hanging down to the rump. Some have it of enormous length, trailing upon the ground. They seldom tie it, but allow their numerous small quaittes to flow in a more graceful manner upon their backs; they always daub it with white and red earth. The women wear their hair short, allowing it to grow no longer than to be of sufficient length to cover the ears and neck. They never tie it, nor make use of any ornament for the head further than sometimes daubing it with red earth.

LASCIVIOUSNESS.

837 609 578 They seem to be a very lascivious people. The men make not the least scruple in offering their wives to lay with strangers, without any solicitation, and are even offended, if their offers are not accepted, unless you can convince them, by some good reason, for refusing to comply, and that it is not out of contempt. They always expect payment for their complaisance, but a mere trifle will satisfy, even a single coat-button. Notwithstanding this courteous behavior to strangers, they are not entirely free from jealousies among themselves, which sometimes cause quarrels and bloodshed. The woman generally falls a sacrifice in an affair of this nature.[1]

MODE OF ROASTING MEAT.

252 They have a very peculiar way of roasting meat; a plecotte, in particular, is suspended from the roof of the hut exactly over the fire, the cord being passed through and fastened to the centre of the piece keeps it in a flat position directly over the flames. A person is seated near it, and with a small stick keeps it continually in motion by pushing it to and fro. When one side is done, it is turned over, and fit for use. This method is much more expeditious than the common way of roasting before the fire, and preferable, as it retains the natural juice and flavor.[2]

EDWARD D. NEILL.

1 [See category 116, p. 342-3. -A.]

2 [For further information in Henry's Journal not mentioned by Neill, see category 116, pp. 343 ff. -Analyst.]